MINUTES OF THE 142nd COMMITTEE MEETING OF STOKE-ON-TRENT SOUTH u3a, HELD IN METHODIST CENTRAL HALL, LONGTON, AT 2pm ON THURSDAY 16th JULY 2026.

PRESENT

Andrew Devin	Chairman
Kevin Ford	Vice-Chairman
Lynne Stevenson	Treasurer
Alan Stevenson	Secretary
Diane Ellis.	Groups Co-ordinator

1. APOLOGIES

Jo Neilson.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous committee meeting held on 11th June 2026 were approved, and signed by the chairman as an accurate record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a. u3a Trust matters

1. A vacancy has opened up on the Third Age Trust Board. The aim of the new opportunity is to drive strategic change. Nominations for the role opened on Thursday 2nd July.

2. This year's u3a essay competition is still open. Entry is free and open to all u3a members. The Deadline is 31st July 2026.

3. The Chief Executive has published the Trust Strategy for 2026-2029. This may be divided into the Trust Vision and Mission. The Strategy will provide a framework for the Trust's role in supporting u3as and promoting and raising awareness of the u3a movement.

4. This year's AGM will again be a hybrid meeting, and will be held at The Midland Hotel, 16 Peter St, Manchester M60 2DS, on Wednesday 14th October 2026.
The Trust has received a "proposed" resolution from Haxby and Wiggington u3a and has been properly seconded. The summary of the resolution is that the Trust are asked to consult member u3as before moving into further campaigning and social policy activity outside the shared purpose of the Trust and u3a movement. The Trust Executive has immediately railed against the proposal.

5. The Trust has published its financial data for 2025/26. Key financial figures were as follows:
Income = £3.732m (against a budget of £3.603m).
Expenditure = £3.649m (against a budget of £3.763m).

The Trust explains that it has generated a surplus of £83k for the year.

b. Regional matters

Sue Russell, Chair of the National u3a Council, is currently representing the interests of the West Midlands Region. She has organised an AI on-line event on August 11th. The event will cover aspects of how AI could simplify essential administration. Branches are encouraged to nominate a representative to attend the event.

c. Branch AGM minutes

Following approval of the accuracy of the minutes of the AGM held on 21st May 2026, a draft copy of these minutes has been placed onto the branch website.

5. SECRETARY / MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

AS stated that, at the date of the meeting, the total persons in membership was 380 (of which 34 were new members) which compared similarly to 384 at July 2025.

It was pleasing to note that the branch had received 346 renewals to date.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

a Treasurer, LS, distributed a Statement of Income and Expenditure as at 13th July 2026. Details were as follows:

	£	
Current	994.15	Balance 2026/27
	18,374.34	B/F from 2025/26
	£19,368.49	**TOTAL BALANCE**

b (i) The Treasurer confirmed that the change in the current balance was largely due to payments relating to room hire. The annual CLA licence would be paid shortly.

(ii) The Treasurer informed the committee that Michelin Sports Centre, St. Pauls' Church, and the "Green" owners for Outdoor Bowling had increased their venue charges. The Treasurer also provided advance warning of potential increases to Central Hall room charges.

The financial health of the branch continues to be very strong.

7. GROUPS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

(i) The chairman provided newly appointed co-ordinator, DE, with a document containing the role specification that was specifically tailored to the branch. Committee members were given sight of the document and were in agreement with its content.

(ii) At the previous committee meeting, DE had requested a copy of the "Group Leaders Guide", however clarity was needed regarding what personal details on the cover sheet DE would consent to. After a short conversation, DE agreed for her email address to be included as the means of member contact. AD agreed to make the appropriate amendment and forward the document to LS. **AD**

(iii) At the previous committee meeting, it was agreed that DE would visit each group in the coming weeks to introduce herself. AD requested that on the occasion of each visit, she should take the opportunity to appeal to attendees to fill the current vacancies on the committee. DE agreed to the request. **DE**

8. ENTERTAINMENTS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

AD is presently undertaking this role, however a member has indicated a strong interest in being co-opted into the position.

a Phil Colclough 25th June – Beautiful Britain.

As a consequence of the country experiencing an intense heatwave, the total attendance, including the committee, was a lowly sixteen members. Phil showed numerous photographs accompanied with music, the general feeling was that the presentation could have been improved with some verbal explanations.

b Bookings, etc.

1. Jon Heal has been booked for 30th July. The title of the presentation is "The photographs of William Blake of Longton." AD will liaise with Jon Heal regarding equipment, etc. **AD**

2. Crafternoon Tea will again be provided in-house, and managed by DE and Beverley Maher. Crafts on offer will be: Card Making; Glass Painting; Flower Arrangements; and an Art Session with the appropriate media. **DE/BM**

DE will provide AD with a publicity narrative to be included in the July/August Newsletter. **DE/AD**

3. AD stated that he had received a request for entertainment provision from a duo named "The Robinsons" – who celebrate the music of Simon and Garfunkel. Their proposed charge of £150 was considered too high based on current attendances, and consequently the request will not be advanced.

4. The committee decided that Holly Reynolds should be approached to provide the musical entertainment at the Christmas gathering. **BM**

9. CATERING

DE raised the question about providing cakes at the Crafternoon Tea meeting on 27th August. It was agreed that cakes could be bought, possibly from a lady who sells her own baked cakes in Longton Market. **DE/LS**

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. Following a discussion at the previous committee meeting, there was a need to clarify "Meet and Greet" arrangements at monthly meetings. Outgoing vice-chairman, Keith Ward, has agreed to undertake this task with regard to new attendees.

2. At the previous committee meeting, it was decided to provide a gift to longstanding committee members, Keith Ward, and Beverley Maher, who retired at the AGM held in May. Both members have conveyed their thanks to the committee for the gift provision.

3. The committee held a short discussion after a question was raised by a group leader whether it was permissible for children to be in attendance at group activities during the summer schools holiday break.

AD explained that children under the age of 18 cannot attend or access u3a activities due to administrative and legal protections. After having second thoughts, the question had however been withdrawn by the group leader prior to the committee meeting.

4. AD advised the committee that a number of guest speakers at monthly meetings were supporting their presentations via "Microsoft Powerpoint" in a 16:9 format. This does cause some difficulty because the branch has only a screen in the 4:3 format.

It was agreed that AD would research costings for a 16:9 screen. The matter will be discussed at the August committee meeting. **AD**

11. <u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u>

3rd September 2026.

The meeting was formally closed at 3.26pm.

Chairman: *A. J. Devin* Date: *3rd September 2026*